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Command and Staff College
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2076 South Street
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Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

MASTERS OF MILITARY STUDIES

US Counterterrorism vs the New Terrorism: Leadership and Strategy are the Keys to Success

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES**

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Academic Year 2001-2002**

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| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | | |
| Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS. | | | | | |
| 1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-07-2002 | | 2. REPORT TYPE Student research paper | | 3. DATES COVERED (FROM - TO) xx-xx-2001 to xx-xx-2002 | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE US Counterterrorism vs the New Terrorism: Leadership and Strategy are the Keys to Success Unclassified | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | | |
| | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | | |
| | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) Haynes, Craig O. ; | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | | |
| | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | | |
| | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University, MCCDC 2076 South Street Quantico, VA22134-5068 | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street, MCCDC Quantico, VA22134-5068 | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | | |
| | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT APUBLIC RELEASE | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT See report. | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES | 19. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON | |
| | | Public Release | 72 | EM114, (blank) lfenster@dtic.mil | |
| a. REPORT Unclassified | b. ABSTRACT Unclassified | c. THIS PAGE Unclassified | | 19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER International Area Code Area Code Telephone Number 703767-9007 DSN 427-9007 | |
| | | | | Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98) Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39.18 | |

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

FORM APPROVED - - - OMB NO. 0704-0188

public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters services, directorate for information operations and reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis highway, suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the office of management and budget, paperwork reduction project (0704-0188), Washington, dc 20503

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| 1. AGENCY USE ONLY (LEAVE BLANK) | | 2. REPORT DATE | 3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE US COUNTERTERRORISM VS THE NEW TERRORISM: LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY ARE THE KEYS TO SUCCESS | | 5. FUNDING NUMBERS N/A | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) LCDR CRAIG O. HAYNES, USN | | | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE 2076 SOUTH STREET, MCCDC, QUANTICO, VA 22134-5068 | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER NONE | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) SAME AS #7. | | 10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER: NONE | |
| 11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES NONE | | | |
| 12A. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT NO RESTRICTIONS | | 12B. DISTRIBUTION CODE N/A | |
| <p>abstract (maximum 200 words)</p> <p>Terrorism has evolved over the last 15 years to a newer, more lethal, global and streamlined transnational threat in the form of Usama bin Laden and his organization, al Qaeda. Over the same period, the "new" terrorism has been focused on US targets with devastating results. Aspects of the new terrorism - its global reach, organization, popularity, and vision have resisted US counterterrorism efforts over the last decade. A lack of strong US leadership and counterterrorism strategy contributed to the successes of the new terrorism against US targets. It is through strong leadership and a solid counterterrorist strategy - using military response, preemption and disruption, rule of law, diplomacy and sanctions - that will restore fear, isolate, shape perceptions and use innovation against the new terrorism, allowing the US to prevail.</p> | | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 14. SUBJECT TERMS (KEY WORDS ON WHICH TO PERFORM SEARCH) Counterterrorism, al Qaeda, New Terrorism, Rule of Law, Intelligence, Military response, Sanctions | | 15. NUMBER OF PAGES: 62 pp text, 66 with illustrations 16. PRICE CODE: N/A | |
| 17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED | 18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE: UNCLASSIFIED | 19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED | 20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT |

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Terrorism has evolved over the last 15 years to a newer, more lethal, global and streamlined transnational threat in the form of Usama bin Laden and his organization, al Qaeda. Over the same period, the “new” terrorism has been focused on US targets with devastating results. Aspects of the new terrorism – its global reach, organization, popularity, and vision have resisted US counterterrorism efforts over the last decade. A lack of strong US leadership and counterterrorism strategy contributed to the successes of the new terrorism against US targets. It is through strong leadership and a solid counterterrorist strategy – using military response, preemption and disruption, rule of law, diplomacy and sanctions - that will restore fear, isolate, shape perceptions and use innovation against the new terrorism, allowing the US to prevail.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objective

Terrorism, over the last fifteen years has evolved to a new form. Transitioning from the Marxist-Leninist based terrorism of the 1970's and Islamic Fundamentalism of the 1980's, the "new" terrorism, as defined in this paper, is global in nature, independently funded (i.e. not tied to state sponsorship), highly organized, vehemently resentful of the West, extremely lethal and apocalyptic in nature. The new terrorism is manifested in the al Qaeda organization, headed by a Saudi, Usama Bin Laden. The US has been the main target of al Qaeda since 1987, the year al Qaeda was formed. Usama bin Laden has been associated with multiple terrorist operations against US interests, including the August 1998 attacks on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, the October 2000 attack on the USS Cole in Yemen and the September 11 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC. Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda have been linked to other terrorist operations against the US since 1992.

US counterterrorism policy, employing law enforcement, military options economic sanctions, diplomacy, and intelligence as elements in counterterrorism are most effectively used together against terrorism. Terrorism, being transnational and asymmetric in nature, requires a combination of the elements of counterterrorism to defeat it. No one element can reduce the threat of terrorism or marginalize it over a sustained period of time. Since 1992, US counterterrorism efforts have not defeated or marginalized al Qaeda. While some of the elements of counterterrorism have had individual successes against terrorist attacks – such as the FBI investigation and subsequent the conviction of IG members in the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center – the lack of strong US leadership against terrorism and a lack of a cohesive counterterrorist strategy mitigated the overall success of US counterterrorism efforts and emboldened Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda to escalate and continue their attacks against US targets through the 1990s.

This paper discusses the aspects, centers of gravity and vulnerabilities of the new terrorism – as defined by Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda. It will also reveal how US counterterrorism efforts between 1992 and September 11, 2001, suffered from a lack of determined leadership in US government and counterterrorism strategy that could have had profound effects against al Qaeda and Usama bin Laden. The paper will prove that leadership and strategy are the key elements in guiding US counterterrorism and offer elements of a counterterrorism strategy to reduce and defeat the threat of the new terrorism.

1.2 Scope

This paper will be limited to the analysis of US counterterrorism efforts from 1990 to September 11, 2001 and focuses on al Qaeda and Usama Bin Laden as the example for the new terrorism. Recommendations for a counterterrorism strategy will focus on post September 11, 2001.

1.3 Overview

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the new terrorism, contrasting it from the “old” terrorism, explain its roots, key aspects and offer its center of gravity and critical vulnerabilities for analysis in Chapter 4. Aspects of counterterrorism are reviewed in Chapter 3, specifically the policies, actions and circumstances surrounding US counterterrorism since 1990 that have mitigated its success through a lack of leadership and strategy and contributed to the growth and boldness of Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda against the US. Chapter 4 describes essential US leadership characteristics to fight terrorism and offers aspects of a counterterrorism strategy, matched against the new terrorism centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 5 summarizes the basic premise of this paper, namely that leadership and strategy are essential to US counterterrorism efforts against the new terrorism.

CHAPTER 2

THE NEW TERRORISM

September 11, 2001. Inside the White House situation room on the morning terrorism transformed America, Franklin C. Miller, the Director for defense policy, was suddenly gripped by a staggering fear: “The White House could be hit. We could be going down.”...Somewhere in the havoc of the moment, Richard A. Clarke, then the White House counterterrorism chief, recalled the long drumbeat of warnings about terrorists striking on American soil, many of them delivered and debated in that very room. After a third hijacked jet had sliced into the Pentagon, others heard Mr. Clarke say it first: “This is al Qaeda.”¹

How could the attacks on September 11 have occurred? Over 150 US agencies with counterterrorism responsibilities (see Figure 1) work against 29 terrorist organizations designated by the US State Department as foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs), with over \$8 billion in federal funds spent on US counterterrorism in 2000 alone² – And yet, despite these efforts, the US remains the number one terrorist target in the world. Why does terrorism against the US continue to be successful? Why has it not ceased altogether? Why has the sole superpower with the most capable military and economy in the world not crushed many smaller, weaker opponents?

¹ Judith Miller, “Many Say U.S. Planned for Terror but Failed to Take Action”, The New York Times, December 30, 2001.

² Center for Nonproliferation Studies, “Federal Funding To Combat Terrorism”, <http://www.cns.miis.edu/research/cbw/terfund.htm>, Monterey Institute of International Studies, California, FY 1998-2001.

The answer is not simple. A review of terrorist attacks against the US over the last decade reveals inconsistencies in US policy in its actions and reactions against terrorism. Terrorism itself has evolved into a disciplined, determined entity – the new terrorism – that challenges our system of government and values. A lack of firm leadership, an inconsistent message to nations and terrorists, and weak US resolve have resulted in increased boldness by terrorists and predisposed them to believe that their attacks will influence US policy and actions. Only a new counterterrorist effort and a steady, focused strategy can marginalize and defeat it. The tools of counterterrorism are multifaceted and must be threaded together by clear strategy and led by firm leadership to be effective. The key aspect of a successful counterterrorist strategy has been and must be strong leadership if the US is to deter terrorism against its citizens and interests.

2.1 Defining Terrorism

The lack of agreement on the definition of terrorism by terrorism experts, the UN, and US agencies in itself demonstrates the difficulties of solving a problem that cannot be unilaterally defined. The problem of definition has hampered US policy in terms of focus, i.e., international terrorism vs domestic terrorism, military response vs civil response and the vagaries of applying the rule of law in prosecuting terrorists internationally and domestically. Terrorism, despite its many definitions, requires steady, even pressure in the form of international cooperation, US foreign policy and guidance led by senior US policymakers to be defeated or suppressed. Almost any definition of terrorism crosses several boundaries – it is not an issue that resides in criminal, military, political, domestic

or international domains but crosses through all of them at will. By definition, therefore, terrorism must be countered by a combination of organizations, agencies, governments and allies within a clear strategy led by a strong leader to defeat it – into bits and pieces, in a daily grinding effort.

The Defense Intelligence Agency adopted the definition of terrorism as “premeditated political violence perpetrated against noncombatant (meaning not engaged in combat at the time of the attack) targets by subnational groups or clandestine state agents usually to influence an audience.” This will be the working definition used in this paper.

2.2 Old Terrorism vs New Terrorism: The Old

Terrorism, by any definition, has been present throughout history. In the last forty years, it has evolved significantly from politically motivated leftist organizations sponsored by the former USSR to support Marxist ideals to radical Islamic organizations which are far less motivated by secular political ideologies but act on apocalyptic interpretations of the Koran.

In the early 1970's, when terrorism was beginning to be studied systematically, radical leftist groups (Marxist-Leninist/Maoist/Stalinist movements) such as the Japanese Red Army, the Red Army Faction in Germany, and the Red Brigades in Italy as well as ethno-nationalist terrorist movements as the Abu Nidal organization, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, (PLO), the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Basque

separatist group (ETA) typified terrorism of the day.³ Their methods consisted of bombings, assassinations, hijacking and kidnapping directed against political figures, military and civil authorities, symbolic citizens (the Israeli athletes killed at the Munich Olympics fit this description) and targets representing countries (banks, embassies, national airlines). Their motivations were revolutionary, i.e. intended to topple governments, change policy or gain independence. Their motives were the spread of communism, the independence of Northern Ireland from Britain, the independence of the Basque region from Spain or the struggle for Palestinian statehood in the Levant. These groups took responsibility for their attacks to gain publicity for their cause. These groups were usually state sponsored, partially or wholly, by the Soviet Union, Syria, Iran and Libya among other countries. ETA and the IRA funded themselves through robbery, extortion and non-state sources.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union was a significant blow to the Marxist/leftist terrorist organizations, halting their funding and certainly lessened the fervor of their cause. Although some leftist groups remain in Italy and Greece, their activities have significantly decreased over the last decade. Even Libya, since turning over the Libyan suspects in 1999 for the 1988 Pam Am Flight 103 bombing, has publicly disassociated itself with terrorism. Changing times, politics and ceasefires have mitigated the fervor of the IRA. Syria and Iran continue to support Hizballah and Hamas which retain their goals of opposing Israel and of establishing an Islamic Palestinian state. The struggle over Palestinian statehood between Israelis and Palestinians has endured over four decades – one of the few examples where secular and non-secular terrorism is intertwined and has not diminished with the passing of time, counterterrorist measures or political solutions.

³ Bruce Hoffman et al Countering the New Terrorism Washington DC, RAND, 1999, p. 8.

At any point when a political solution was near, religious terrorists (Iranian – backed Hamas, Hizballah or other religiously based terrorists) have resorted to violence. Philosophically, the old terrorist groups wanted to engineer a significant change in their countries and societies and belong to that greater change, i.e., survive it. The faith-based terrorist – mostly Muslims – have little intention of surviving the change or the goals of the terrorist group. Their reward comes in the afterlife, not in their "changed" society. This reveals much of their resolve, leadership, unity and singularity of purpose – this defines the al-Qaeda, the terrorist group led by the former Saudi millionaire Usama bin Laden. Over the last 15 years, while secular, politically motivated terrorism has largely passed on, religious-based terrorism has flourished.

2.3 The New Terrorism

Today, the predominant form of terrorism posing the biggest threat to the West is Islamic fundamentalism or, more accurately, Islamic extremism. This form of terrorism has given birth to, and perpetuates the "new" terrorism. *Islamic Extremism* is unconventional political participation involving terrorism, non-tolerance or violent attacks against civilian non-combatants. *Islamic fundamentalism* is a term associated with movements who desire a revival of religious virtues or want to return to the source of religious theology and way of life. While the majority of Islamic fundamentalists are peaceful and do not support violence to extend fundamentalism through Muslim countries, Islamic extremists have splintered from the fundamentalist groups, taking their beliefs to violent extremes.

The fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and the ascendancy of Ayatollah Khomeini was an important event to Islamic extremism as was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the same year. The recurring theme important in the birth of fundamentalism was reinforced; the failure of the secular state to satisfy its people, sustain power and popularity. Since the end of colonialism after World War II, few secular Arab governments in the Middle East have been successful; Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan are the few examples of Arab state success and stability, some with significant western support. The fall of the Shah was mostly attributed to a corrupt regime where the wealthy minority kept a poor majority of Muslims under control. Moreover, the Shah's government tried to modernize Iran too fast – Iranian society was not ready to embrace western values and could not find a balance between secular and religious government. After the fall of the Shah, Iran chose to fully embrace the Koran within government going back to far simpler values. Iran changed to a restrictive society where the answer to every problem is found through strict interpretation of the Koran, not a Socratic, free-thinking environment. The absence of an economically strong middle class increased the gap between the Shah's upper class and the average Iranian. Prior to the revolution, Iranian mullahs and clerics began to gain stronger support in Iran as they preached a return to a simpler life dictated through the fundamentalist teachings of the Koran. It is human nature that when people face daily adversity, they return to their faith; such was the case in Iran. These themes of economic failure, apprehension of rapid westernization, failed secular politics and returning to Islam has been demonstrated repeatedly in the Muslim world and contributes to the frustration and bitterness of Islamic extremists. The lack of strong Arab political structure and government systems, endemic in the Middle East,

have led to unemployment, weak infrastructure/economies and resentment of the West for its economic success and global influence. Globalization of the world economy, led by the US, has widened the gulf between the West and the Middle East. Saudi Arabia and the Emirates are the economic exception of this disparity in the Middle East, due to their position as the worlds leading oil exporters but are under constant criticism by fundamentalists accusing the Saudi government of being too close to the US. The economic divide between the West and the poorer Arab nations will always provide impetus for Islamic extremism. As western economic success induces other countries to join the global market and adopt western ways to improve the quality of living, there will always be a dissatisfied minority that see the embrace of western technology and business as evil and against Islamic tradition. Moreover, the political factionalism of Arab societies and beliefs throughout the Middle East contributes to a lack of unity in government, contributing to their failure. The Koran continues to be used by extremists as political tool in the Middle East to keep regimes in power or to destroy them. The crisis of secular Arab governments fuels extremism throughout the Middle East. These circumstances are key components in the birth and sustainment of the new terrorism and must be addressed by the US in a counterterrorism strategy – using diplomacy and leadership – to marginalize the new terrorism.

Fundamentalist terrorism has now evolved to a third generation - from Marxist to fundamentalist terrorism to the “new” terrorism, born in the late 1980’s - from the fundamentalist roots of Ayatollah Khomheni and Shaykh Umar Abd al-Rahman to the Armed Islamic group (GIA) in Algeria and al Qaeda in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan. In Iran, the personification of fundamentalism was the Ayatollah Khomheni. Khomheni’s

rule began with terrorism with the seizure of the US Embassy on 30 November 1979, holding 52 US hostages for 444 days. Khomheni's regime provided a breeding ground for Islamic extremist terrorism, manifesting itself in the terrorist group Hizballah, focused against Israel. Simultaneously, Muslims from all over the Middle East and Southwest Asia were encouraged to join the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the early 1980's. The "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan, comprised of Afghan and non-Afghan Muslims, fought and defeated one of the two world superpowers by 1989, increasing their own legitimacy; Usama bin Laden began to believe that if the Soviets could be beaten and kicked out of Afghanistan, America could be expelled from Saudi Arabia (after the Gulf War) through terrorism.

These fighters, unemployed after the Soviets left Afghanistan in 1989 were the nucleus for forming al Qaeda, led by Usama bin Laden. A group whose leaders had a significant influence on Usama bin Laden, Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (IG) formed in the late 1970's, was based in Egypt. Their goal was to overthrow the Egyptian government and the establishment of an Islamic fundamentalist Egyptian state. While not all saw combat, some 5,000 Saudis, 3,000 Yemenis, 2,800 Algerians, 2,000 Egyptians, 400 Tunisians, 350 Iraqis, 200 Libyans and dozens of Jordanians served alongside the Afghani Mujahideen in the war against the Soviets. Between 1,000 and 1,500 veterans returned to Algeria and formed the backbone of the Islamic radicals who are continuing to fight against the Algerian government in a nine-year civil war that has claimed more than 100,000 lives. Those veterans who returned to Egypt under the title of "the returnees from Afghanistan" became valued members of the Gamaa Islamiya and the Jihad group, but their success as terrorist was severely limited by arrest campaigns and several mass

trials in the 1990s. Once numbering in the thousands in active members, Egyptian security crackdowns and a ceasefire issued in March 1999 between Egypt and the IG curbed the IG's activities.⁴ Some Egyptians, realizing they would be imprisoned if they returned home, remained in Afghanistan or took refuge wherever they could. US authorities have said that as many as 200 Afghan veterans settled in the New York/New Jersey area, some of them congregating around the New Jersey mosque where Omar Abdel Rahman preached. Rahman was convicted of masterminding the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993 and is now in a US prison. At the time, the attack was unique, bringing international terrorism on a large scale to the US. It is interesting to speculate that if the 1993 attack had been successful and brought down the towers, America's current focus on terrorism would have been ongoing for nine years – probably suppressing the factors leading up to the September 11th attacks. One of the IG's senior leaders, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, was drawn to Usama bin Laden for his leadership and vast funds to advocate Islamic extremism worldwide and has functioned as Bin Laden's senior counsel for several years. Their unification led to the founding of al Qaeda in 1986.⁵

One of Usama bin Laden's objectives is the removal of US presence from the Middle East, specifically from Saudi Arabia, however it is now more far-reaching. He was enraged by King Fahd's decision to let American troops wage the Persian Gulf War from Saudi Arabia, site of the two holiest shrines in Islam. As a result, Bin Laden began to focus his wrath on the United States and the Saudi government.⁶ Drawing on the

⁴ Patterns, p. 58.

⁵ Stephen Engleberg, "One Man and a Global Web of Violence", The New York Times, 14 January 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/14/world/14JIHA.htm>, accessed February 2, 2002, pg 5.

⁶ Engleberg, p.6.

reserves of disaffected Muslims throughout the world, al Qaeda brought in fighters to support the Afghan resistance against the Soviets. At the end of the war against the Soviets, Bin Laden and his followers believed they were responsible for defeating one superpower - the Soviet Union, effectively leading to the dissolution of the USSR. Building on the pool of Afghan war veterans scattered worldwide, Bin Laden became intent on defeating the other superpower, the US, and has been attempting to do so through terrorism since 1987.⁷ The training camps that had once schooled rebels to battle the Soviet enemy now attracted militants more interested in fomenting holy war in their own countries — in America, Europe or the Middle East.⁸ Usama Bin Laden claimed success in 1993 when the US departed Somalia after the deaths of 18 US servicemen in a botched raid on a Somali stronghold; he believed the US was casualty-averse, committed to foreign policies and “occupation” only until the US took casualties. Usama bin Laden is allied with Islamic extremist groups worldwide - Jemaah Islamiyah in the Philippines, Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen, a Pakistani Islamist group and the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan among others to overthrow regimes they deem “non-Islamic”, expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries, envisioned as a war on many simultaneous fronts. Bin Laden issued a statement in February 1998 under the banner “World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders” stating it was the duty of all Muslims to kill US citizens, both civilian and military, including their allies.⁹

⁷ Engleberg, p.3

⁸ Engleberg, p 5.

⁹ Patterns, p.68.

The aspects of “new” terrorism, defined Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda, include global reach, escalated violence, organizational skills, popularity, funding and an apocalyptic vision. These are discussed in detail in the following section.

2.3.1 Global Reach

Al Qaeda is believed to have cells in over 60 countries and has attacked targets all over the world. According to CIA estimates, Usama bin Laden has trained over 50,000 militants of all nationalities in training camps in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime.¹⁰ While most terrorist groups traditionally confined their activities to influence a specific region or government, UBL’s sphere of influence is worldwide. In addition to claiming responsibility for influencing the attacks against US forces in Somalia, UBL has been associated with failed terrorist operations in Manila, Jordan and on the US/Canadian border; the August 1998 attacks on the US Embassies in Africa, the October 1999 bombing of the USS COLE in Yemen and the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Washington DC.

These attacks have grown in scope, audacity, lethality and their disregard for civilian deaths with each successive attack. It is believed that attack plans can take from 4-6 months to several years to complete - a new concept in terrorist operations. Not only does al Qaeda has global reach, it has depth as well. In the case of the foiled attacks in Jordan, interviews with the terrorists revealed their operation had been planned for years but lacked sufficient financial backing and training; al Qaeda provided the plot leader

¹⁰ Judith Miller, “Holy Warriors Killing for the Glory of God, in a Land Far From Home” The New York Times, January 16, 2001.

with explosives training, approved his targets and set the timing of the operation. Much like a bank lends money, Bin Laden and al Qaeda sponsor terrorism throughout the world.¹¹ Demonstrating the reach of al Qaeda, in February, 2002, Asian law enforcement officials, while investigating an alleged plot by Muslim extremists to blow up Western embassies and U.S. naval vessels in Asia, uncovered a sophisticated underground group affiliated with the al Qaeda terrorist network in Southeast Asia that aided participants in the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and the Pentagon. The group, known as Jemaah Islamiah, or Islamic Group, had cells in Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia and also operated in the Philippines. The militant group was directed by a radical Indonesian cleric, Riduan Isamuddin, who served as a conduit between his followers in Asia and al Qaeda leaders in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Isamuddin, who used the alias Hambali, hosted two men in Malaysia in January 2000 who later went on to hijack the American Airlines Flight 77 plane that crashed into the Pentagon, according to Malaysian government officials. Later that year, officials said, Hambali ordered a member of the Malaysian cell to provide accommodations and a letter of reference to another visitor to Malaysia, Zacarias Moussaoui, a man now in U.S. custody, charged in connection with the September 11 attacks.¹²

The full extent of al Qaeda's network is not known. Current and future investigations and intelligence operations over the next several months, possibly years, may reveal the true extent of al Qaeda's global reach.

¹¹ Engleberg, p 6.

2.3.2 Escalated Violence

According to the State Department's Patterns of Global Terrorism 2000, the number of terrorist attacks was higher per year in the 1980's than in the 1990's. There is a correlation in the decline in number of terrorist attacks in 1990's and the dissolution of the USSR in 1991 and the decline in communist state sponsored terrorism; this is not so for religious based terrorism. Terrorism motivated in whole or in part by religious imperatives has often led to more intense acts (or attempts) of violence that have produced considerably higher levels of fatalities, compared to secular terrorism, which historically has been less lethal. Furthermore, the number of fatalities from terrorist attacks has increased in the 1990's.¹³ 1996 was the bloodiest year of the 90's, with 25 US citizens killed and 540 injured. The percentage of fatal attacks has increased steadily in the 1970s from 17-19% to the 1980s, to 24-29% through the 1990s. Religious terrorism tends to be more lethal than secular terrorism because of the radically different value systems, mechanisms of legitimization and justification, concepts of morality and Manichaeic world views (holy writings that divide the world between good and evil) directly affecting the "holy" terrorists' motivation. Religion functions as a legitimizing force, specifically sanctioning wide-scale violence against an almost open-ended category of opponents (i.e., all peoples who are not members of the religious terrorists' religion or cult).¹⁴ For example, the GIA in Algeria target non-believers (Muslims who do not support their jihad) and have slaughtered entire villages throughout Algeria since 1993 with the same gusto as they target secular Algerian authorities in their struggle to

¹² Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Reach", The Washington Post, February 3, 2002, pg A01.

¹³ Countering the New Terrorism, p. 10

¹⁴ Ibid, pp 19-20.

overthrow the government. Several other reasons exist for the increase in the level of violence. The third generation of terrorism – the new terrorism (the first being Marxist-Leninist, the second being Fundamentalist) believes terrorism will be successful in bringing about change; that it will have a greater impact on the West through more lethal attacks (the West becoming desensitized to terrorist attacks through the 70's and 80's); and believes in the apocalyptic vision of the destruction of the West. The attacks on the US embassies in Africa were significant for UBL because out of the more than 300 civilian casualties (and over 5000 injured), only 12 were US casualties. This graduated lethality, regardless of nationality, is a signature of the new terrorism. The attacks of September 11th in New York and Washington DC are evidence of this lethality and scale. It is reasonable to expect Usama bin Laden to use weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and bio-chemical weapons in future attacks; an Iraqi, Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, connected to Bin Laden, has already attempted to buy enriched uranium in Europe in the mid 1990s.¹⁵ During that period, Salim became a link between Iran and Bin Laden; as a result, al Qaeda members soon received training from Hezbollah. This is a noteworthy event since it marked the first time radical Shiite Muslims associated with extremists from the dominant Sunni branch. This is further evidence of how UBL has succeeded in closing "gaps" between terrorist groups and governments with different beliefs and motives.

¹⁵ Engleberg, p.8.

2.3.3 Organizational Skills

While advocating a return to fundamentalism, Bin Laden has demonstrated skill in using all the technology and connectivity of a western corporation. Use of satellite phones (Kenyan plotters spoke directly with Usama bin Laden by satellite telephone as they developed their plans to blow up the US Embassy in 1998), the internet, encrypted e-mail, training and recruiting videos, a lengthy al Qaeda instruction book on CD-ROM (including a blessing for al Qaeda members) and exceptional operational security practices have all helped to command, control and extend al Qaeda's worldwide reach. Redundancies in al Qaeda's system include worldwide couriers able to move through established networks and countries and extensive use of cover organizations. The organization itself is flat and decentralized so that the elimination of its top members will not cause its demise, but could allow it continue functioning, through al Qaeda cells in individual countries, acting on their own instruction. Furthermore, al Qaeda grew practically unchecked for thirteen years, enjoying sanctuary in Pakistan, Sudan and Afghanistan, while suffering no significant setbacks militarily or organizationally. During the last decade, participants in nearly every plot against the US and its allies have learned the arts of war and explosives in Afghan camps.¹⁶ UBL has become well adapted to the Information age and is taking full advantage of it.

2.3.4 Popularity

UBL has drawn his power from disaffected Muslims worldwide. The al Qaeda recruit can be rich or poor, uneducated or cultured, but shares one ideal: disaffection with Islamic statehood/western influence somewhere in the world and is willing to die to change it. This ideal is linked with resentment towards Western culture. Usama bin Laden's strength is his universal appeal. Other terrorist groups focus their goals narrowly and draw manpower from a specific demographic group; but as long as a recruit believes in Usama Bin Laden's basic ideals, nationality does not matter - al Qaeda training camps have been filled with Chechens, Uzbekis, Yemenis, Kuwaitis, Pakistanis, Egyptians, Algerians, Filipinos, Britons, Germans and Americans, multiplying the number of his forces and making them difficult to track from a counterterrorist perspective.

Bin Laden's followers in Sudan in the early 90's trained in explosives, weapons, kidnapping, urban fighting, counterintelligence and how to set up "cells" in their native countries. According to intelligence documents released by the US State Department, the front issued a chilling new "fatwa," or religious decree: "To kill Americans and their allies, both civil and military, is an individual duty of every Muslim who is able, in any country where this is possible." Muslim scholars see such decrees worldwide as a perversion of Islam, and adherence to such interpretations exists only on the farthest fringes of the faith. But, to Bin Laden, these decrees helped unify his disparate followers. To quote one Afghan war veteran (a Yemeni from a poor family of 10), who had his living and training expenses paid for by the teachers at his madrassa (religious academy) in Yemen - "When you have a gun in your hand, you're free – you feel as if you can do

¹⁶ Engleberg, p.9.

anything.” Another Bin Laden militant from the Xingiang province in China, held prisoner by the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan, was not defeated by his capture, and stated that when he is released “I will go fight a jihad in China.”¹⁷ While the "old" terrorism was usually region specific, the "new" terrorism will take seed anywhere Muslim extremists feel they can influence "change" through terrorism - including in the US.

2.3.5 Funding

An essential part of UBL's success is based on his vast independent wealth (valued at \$300 million by the US State Department in the mid 1980's), which allows him flexibility and no fiscal limits to his plans and operations. This financial independence is unusual in terrorist organizations - it allows autonomy from political masters in al Qaeda's operations and increases difficulty for counterterrorism efforts to isolate their support. By not having to commit robbery or kidnapping to raise funds (as ETA and the IRA once did) al Qaeda draws little attention to itself. UBL has been associated with states that sponsor terrorism (Iran, Yemen, Sudan) but actual fiscal ties are unknown - he has not had to be constricted by their sponsorship because of his financial independence. His legal businesses in Sudan in the early 1990's - a bank in Khartoum and export companies for gum, sunflower and sesame products helped to make money for worldwide training and operations efforts.¹⁸ Prior to 1993, al Qaeda created a cell in Kenya as a "gateway" to its operations in Somalia. Members of the group blended into Kenyan society, opened legitimate businesses that sold fish and dealt in diamonds, and

¹⁷ Miller, p.6

operated an Islamic charity.¹⁹ By the mid-1990's, American officials had begun to focus on bin Laden and his entourage in Sudan. They saw him as the embodiment of a dangerous new development: a stateless sponsor of terrorism who was using his personal fortune — which one Middle Eastern official estimated at \$270 million — to bankroll extremist causes.²⁰ Much of his personal wealth has now been spent, or is in bank accounts that are now frozen. Investigators say UBL raises money through a network of charities and businesses. His group reconstitutes its networks in many countries as quickly as they are disrupted.²¹ Monitoring large cash transactions from chartered banks, the US Treasury Department and the Counterterrorism Strategy Group (an interagency panel) noticed a trend of unregulated cash transfers called hawala, from the Arabic word for “change” and the Hindi word for “trust”. Hawala offered a method of transferring money across international borders without physically moving it, relying on trusted partners on each side. To send money to Pakistan, for example, a person could hand dollars to a teashop owner in Brooklyn. The shop owner would call a relative in Pakistan with instructions, and the relative would pay out in Rupees on the other end. Hawala appeared to create a vulnerable point of entry for al Qaeda operational funds into the US.²² This scale of fiscal independence is a new facet to terrorism; previously, ties to state sponsorship was the main source of funding for terrorists.

¹⁸ Engleberg, p.9

¹⁹ Engleberg, p.8

²⁰ Engleberg, p.10

²¹ Engleberg, p.8

²² Barton Gellman, “Struggles Inside The Government Defined Campaign”, The Washington Post, December 20, 2001, p. A01.

2.3.6 An Apocalyptic Vision

There is no lack of fervor among the al Qaeda faithful. Like all terrorists, al Qaeda has stated goals; however, unlike the secular terrorism of the 70's, the "new" terrorist does not want to bargain or negotiate his position - he or she has made up his mind to die for his cause, no matter what the outcome of his attack may be. It is not a relationship between the terrorist and his victim; it is a relationship between the terrorist and getting to "Paradise". The victims of the terrorist attack are merely the vehicles that get the terrorist to Paradise. The faith-based (or apocalyptic) terrorist "wants out" while the practical terrorist "wants back in". The practical terrorist wants his form of change in his own region or country whereas the apocalyptic terrorist seeks global change, setting unrealistic goals and futilely ready to die striving for unachievable goals²³. The apocalyptic terrorist has given up on standards, rules and laws of society; he has entered into a pact with his beliefs to which there is only one good way out – and no one even in his faith can alter that course.

Demonization of one's perceived enemies or problems is easier to face than taking responsibility for contributing to positive, non-violent change in society and solving economic problems – blaming your problems on others is easier than trying to fix them yourself. Bin Laden relieves his followers of those pressures by returning extremists to the time of the writing of the Koran – arm yourself, train, go slay the demon and ascend to paradise for greater personal glory and honor for your family. While Hizballah suicide bombers in Lebanon have followed a mantra similar to this since the 1980's in pursuit of a Palestinian state, Bin Laden has evolved fundamentalist terrorism to its next generation – the new terrorism – and exported it worldwide. Anyone who dissents with

Bin Laden's beliefs poses a direct threat. In Clausewitzian terms, Bin Laden's methods are "not the continuation of politics by other means"; Bin Laden does not want to negotiate. The desired endstate of Bin Laden's campaign is the US brought down economically and internationally through military misadventure and fallout in the Middle East – specifically in Saudi Arabia. No other outcome will satisfy bin Laden.

2.4 The New Terrorism - Summary

The new terrorism is global, independently funded, highly organized, fueled by individuals from a society who blame their failures on the West (and feel incompatible with western society), growing in lethality and apocalyptic in nature. In Clausewitzian terms, the new terrorism's centers of gravity (COG) are the following;

Message: Their belief in their cause (terrorism will change world policies) and their ability to cloak their goals in the teachings of Islam

Cohesion: Their ability to unite disparate extremist groups worldwide increasing their combat power

Sanctuary: Their training camps, schools and recruiting centers in Afghanistan and Pakistan and any other nation that supports al Qaeda within its borders

Knowledge: Their understanding of our rules, boundaries, borders and laws and how to work outside them.

²³ Ralph Peters, "When Devils Walk the Earth", In Press, January, 2002.

These centers of gravity, if eliminated, or challenged over a period of time will bow Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda most quickly to our will. Critical vulnerabilities (CV) are aspects of a COG that if exploited, will do significant damage to an adversary's ability to resist. Vulnerabilities cannot be critical unless they undermine a key strength. The new terrorism's CVs are their:

Leadership (if eliminated, will severely damage their effectiveness)

Support from Muslim countries and governments

Covert financial network

Environment that allows their ideas to flourish

The Application of Counterterrorism

To restate the question posed at the beginning of this paper: What can the US do to counter this threat? All the tools of counterterrorism must be used to defeat the new terrorism and influence the environment that supports it. Above all, strong focused leadership armed with an unwavering strategy applied indefinitely against their center of gravity and critical vulnerabilities will result in reducing the threat of the new terrorism.

CHAPTER 3

ASPECTS OF COUNTERTERRORISM

Counterterrorism is defined as offensive measures taken to disrupt, deter and respond to terrorism. Since the early 1970's, the pillars of US counterterrorism have been

- To make no concessions to terrorists and strike no deals
- To bring terrorists to justice for their crimes
- To isolate and apply pressure on states that sponsor terrorism to force them and change their behavior
- To bolster the counterterrorist capabilities of those countries that work with the US and require assistance

Over the past several decades, US counterterrorism policy has taken several different forms - preemption and disruption, intelligence, diplomatic measures, international legal conventions, economic sanctions, military retaliation, prosecution and defensive measures. While terrorism cannot be universally defeated, its threat can be reduced or managed. Individually, the eight "tools" of counterterrorism are not effective, but combined and applied in a strategy backed with solid leadership, they can be successful.

Unfortunately, a US counterterrorism strategy and solid leadership in counterterrorism has not been evident in the years 1990-2000. Figure 2 displays terrorist actions and US reactions during 1990 – 2000 and demonstrates how poor leadership and a lack of counterterrorism strategy have led to the circumstances that surrounded the 11

September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington DC.

3.1 How Did We Get Here?

Thomas Jefferson once said, in dealing with the Barbary pirates (the transnational criminals of his day), “An insult unpunished is the parent of others.” Jefferson overturned the George Washington/ John Adams policy of paying protection money to the Barbary pirates who preyed on commerce from bases in Morocco, Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli. Summarily, Jefferson sent the US Navy to the Mediterranean to bombard the pirates’ bases, the military installations of their government sponsors and blockaded their coasts, eventually forcing their submission, thereby insuring what international law of sea had failed to secure: the freedom of trading ships to move on the high seas.²⁴

The Clinton Administration would have done well to heed Jefferson’s version of counterterrorism. Figure 2 illustrates significant terrorist al Qaeda events and corresponding US counterterrorism failures and successes since 1993. Not included on Figure 2 are the al Qaeda plans not carried out – the assassination of Pope John Paul II during his visit to Manila in late 1994, simultaneous bombings of the US and Israeli embassies in Manila and other Asian capitals in late 1994, the midair bombing of a dozen US trans-pacific flights in 1995 and a plot to kill President Clinton during a visit to the Philippines in 1995.²⁵ As figure 2 reveals (and is detailed below), the recurrent themes in US counterterrorism efforts since 1993 are a lack of a counterterrorism strategy, poor

²⁴ Representative Jim Courter and Christopher Harmon, “Protecting Our Citizens: When to Use Force against Terrorists”, Policy Review, Spring 1986.

intelligence, the emphasis on only one tool of counterterrorism (law enforcement), insufficient commitment to focus all of the counterterrorism tools and the doubt of no public support in the fight against terrorism. These problems could have been alleviated by a coordinated counterterrorism strategy with prioritized goals, enforced by strong leadership. What follows is a review of how the tools of US counterterrorism were employed against al Qaeda since 1993.

3.1.1 Rule of Law

After the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, the Clinton Administration appointed the FBI as lead agency against counterterrorism and in the bombing investigation. It seemed to be a sound decision, as it resulted in the arrest, conviction and imprisonment of six Islamic Group members. This highlights one of the drawbacks of the criminal investigative approach to counterterrorism; the perpetrators were captured, but the senior planners of the terrorist plot remained at large. Today, US experts view that attack as the first of many missed warnings. "In retrospect, the wake-up call should have been the 1993 World Trade Center bombing," said Michael Sheehan, counterterrorism coordinator at the State Department in the last years of the Clinton presidency. The implications of the F.B.I.'s investigation were disturbing. The F.B.I. was "caught almost totally unaware that these guys (IG members in the US) were in here," recalled Robert M. Blitzer, a former senior counterterrorism official in the bureau's headquarters. "It was alarming to us that these guys had been coming and going since 1985 and we didn't know." According to FBI officials, Usama bin Laden's name surfaced in the case; Bin Laden, they learned, was financing the Office of Services, a Pakistan-based group

²⁵ Gabriel Schoenfeld, "Could 11 September Have Been Averted?" Commentary, December 2001, p 21.

involved in organizing the new jihad. Further, the mastermind of the Trade Center attack, Ramzi Yousef, had stayed for several months in a Pakistani guest house supported by bin Laden. The first World Trade Center bombing raised the consciousness of some at the FBI, but it had little lasting resonance for the White House. President Clinton, who would prove gifted at leading the nation through sorrowful occasions, never visited the site. Congress tightened immigration laws, but the concern about porous borders quickly dissipated and the new rules were never put in effect.²⁶

The first indication of Usama bin Laden's involvement in terrorism on American soil was not pursued. This became a recurring theme until 1998 – there were hints of Usama bin Laden's involvement in terrorist acts prior to 1998, but no dedicated US action against him until after the 1998 Embassy bombings. One of the drawbacks of a criminal investigation approach to counterterrorism is that it is easily halted by legal limitations – the burden of proof – whereas intelligence agencies can act on analysis of information, a far less lengthy process. Poor interagency coordination and rules of law obstructed the sharing of FBI evidence with intelligence agencies. The evidence gathered by FBI agents and prosecutors came under the protection of laws mandating grand-jury secrecy — meaning the law-enforcement side of the investigation could not tell the intelligence side of the investigation what was going on. "Nobody outside the prosecutorial team and maybe the FBI had access," says James Woolsey, who was CIA director at the time. "It was all under grand-jury secrecy." On the subject of who was behind the attacks, Woolsey stated, "I made repeated attempts to see Clinton privately to take up a whole range of issues and was unsuccessful." As a result of the CIA being

²⁶ Judith Miller, "Many Say U.S. Planned For Terror But Failed to Take Action", The New York Times, December 30, 2001.

literally ignored by the President, some of the nation's most critical intelligence capabilities went unused.²⁷ In 1995, a Presidential Directive gave the FBI authority to investigate terrorism domestically and internationally, however, the FBI investigation of the 1995 Khobar towers bombing resulted in few arrests and was hampered by a lack of Saudi cooperation. In the Khobar towers case, according to Richard Clarke, the national coordinator for counterterrorism in the White House, the Saudis impeded the FBI investigation because they were worried about a hostile US response to what the FBI could have found. Several leads in the Khobar Towers bombing led to Iranian involvement. The Clinton Administration did not relish the prospect of military retaliation against a country that seemed to be moderating its anti-western policies.²⁸ FBI Director Louis Freeh, who went to Saudi Arabia several times to press the inquiry, complained that the Saudis refused to share evidence or allow access to suspects. After the 1995 bombing in Riyadh that killed five Americans, the Saudis beheaded several suspects despite repeated FBI requests to interview them. Freeh was frustrated to learn that the President had barely mentioned the case in meetings with Saudi leaders. In September 1998, frustrated at the lack of support from the White House, Freeh took the extraordinary step of secretly asking former President George Bush to intercede with the Saudi royal family. Acting without Clinton's knowledge, Bush made the request and the Saudis began to provide new information to the FBI, which indeed pointed to Iran.²⁹ Freeh also turned over his list of Khobar Towers bombing suspects to president George W. Bush before he stepped down as head of the FBI. In June 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the indictment of fourteen suspects; thirteen Saudis and one

²⁷ Byron York, "Clinton Has No Clothes" National Review Online, December 17, 2001 p 3.

²⁸ Lawrence Wright, "The Counter Terrorist", The New Yorker, January 14, p 58.

Lebanese. No Iranian officials were named in the indictment.³⁰ When he retired last Spring, Freeh publicly stated that the Khobar towers bombing was “the only unfinished piece of business I have.”³¹ Again, a lack of forceful leadership and strategy (that would have included efforts on diplomatic and intelligence fronts) stymied the FBI – a counterterrorism tool that didn’t have all the help it needed.

3.1.2 Intelligence

In addition to the aforementioned law blocking the FBI from sharing information in grand jury subpoenas with the intelligence community (consequently lifted in October, 2001), the CIA Director from 1993-95, R. James Woolsey, never got to meet with President Clinton after his initial interview when the President entered office. President Clinton kept his most senior intelligence officer literally at arm’s length. How could the President’s intelligence priorities be promulgated if he did not talk to the head of the CIA? Further, the US intelligence community was not focused clearly on terrorism itself for several reasons. Its ability to collect HUMINT (intelligence gained from human sources – prisoner interrogations, former terrorists, etc) was weak. HUMINT is key to gaining intelligence on terrorist organizations. The CIA’s Counter Terrorism Center (CTC) and Directorate of Operations have been at odds since the CTC was established in 1986. The CTC was bolstered with more funds and manpower after the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, but it remained a paper-shuffling unit whose officers were not

²⁹ York, p 4.

³⁰ York, p 4.

³¹ Susan Page, “Why Clinton Failed to Stop bin Laden”, USA Today, November 12, 2001.

required to be proficient in foreign languages.³² In 1995, the CIA was widely criticized after it was revealed that a paid informant in Guatemala had been involved in the murders of an American innkeeper and the Guatemalan husband of an American lawyer. The informant had been kept on the CIA payroll even though his activities were known to the directorate of Operations. John Deutch, the CIA's third director in a three year period, responded to the abuses by issuing a directive calling for prior approval from CIA headquarters before any person with criminal or human rights issues could be recruited. The "scrub order" as it came to be known, was responsible for the loss of hundreds of "assets", i.e., human intelligence sources, consequently, were stricken from the CIA payroll, with a devastating effect on counterterrorist operations in the Middle East.³³

In 1996, the first significant defector from al Qaeda walked into an American Embassy in Africa and provided a detailed account of the organization's operations and ultimate objectives. The defector, Jamal Ahmed al-Fadl, told American officials that Usama bin Laden had taken aim at the United States and other Western governments, broadening his initial goal of overthrowing Saudi Arabia and other "infidel" Middle Eastern governments. He said that Al Qaeda was trying to buy a nuclear bomb and other unconventional weapons. Usama bin Laden was also trying to form an anti-American terrorist front that would unite radical groups. Tragically, Mr. Fadl's statements were not widely circulated within the government. A senior official said their significance was not fully understood by President Clinton's top advisers until Fadl's public testimony in 2000.

Missed intelligence opportunities and poor interagency coordination continued throughout the 1990s. While the State Department listed Usama bin Laden as a financier

³² Seymour Hersh, "What Went Wrong", The New Yorker, October 1, 2001.

³³ Hersh, p 7.

of terror in its 1996 survey of terrorism, Al Qaeda was not included on the list of terrorist organizations subject to various sanctions released by the United States in 1997.³⁴

In 1996, Sudanese officials met with their CIA and State Department counterparts and signaled that they might turn Usama bin Laden over to another country - Saudi Arabia and Egypt were possibilities. State Department and CIA officials urged both Egypt and Saudi Arabia to accept him, according to former Clinton officials. "But both were afraid of the domestic reaction and refused," one recalled. Critics of the Administration's effort said this was an early missed opportunity to destroy al Qaeda. President Clinton himself would have had to lean hard on the Saudi and Egyptian governments. The White House believed no amount of pressure would change the outcome, and President Clinton risked spending valuable capital on a losing cause. "We were not about to have the president make a call and be told no," one official explained. Sudan obliquely hinted that it might turn bin Laden over to the United States, a former official said. But in the spring of 1996, the Justice Department reviewed the case and concluded that it did not have enough evidence (the drawback of the rule of law approach to counterterrorism) to charge Bin Laden with the attacks on American troops in Yemen and Somalia.³⁵ As early as 1996, Sudan's intelligence service, the Mukhabaret, had closely followed Usama bin Laden's activities and contacts while he was still in Sudan, amassing a considerable amount of intelligence. Overtures to the State Department and FBI were made by the Sudanese to share the intelligence, but they were repeatedly rebuffed. Tim Carney, the US Ambassador to Sudan, whose posting ended in 1997,

³⁴ Miller.

³⁵ Ibid.

stated “the fact is, they were opening the doors, and we weren’t taking them up on it.”³⁶

The US failed to reciprocate Sudan’s willingness to give intelligence on an individual that earlier in 1996 the US had insufficient information to prosecute. The pattern of missed opportunities represents hesitancy, a clear lack of priority and foresight by the Clinton Administration to stop Usama bin Laden. There was no sense of urgency to stop a suspected terrorist - or creativity in using other counterterrorist measures to subdue or track him. Three years later, millions of dollars would be spent by the same administration to hunt down Bin Laden that they had on platter. Even when the CIA stressed the threat of terrorism, the director did not gain the attention of political leadership below the President. One Democrat blamed the process within the Senate committee, which, he said, neglected terrorism in favor of more politically charged issues: “CIA Director George Tenet’s been briefing about bin Laden for years, but we weren’t organized to consider what are threats to the United States. We’re chasing whatever the hell is in the news at the moment.”³⁷ Leadership against counterterrorism certainly would have made a difference, bringing it to the attention of the senate as an important issue – but that did not occur.

The Clinton Administration is certainly guilty of not making counterterrorism a top priority – which would have forced the US intelligence community to unite their assets and organizations to provide better intelligence on Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda. If counterterrorism had been a top priority of the administration and an enforced strategy had been undertaken after the World Trade Center was bombed the first time, US intelligence would have had 5 years – prior to the 1998 Embassy Bombings - to track and

³⁶ David Rose, “The Osama Files,” Vanity Fair, January 2002, p. 67.

³⁷ Hersh, p 4.

fully pursue the threat of the new terrorism. This lack of intelligence focus, on one part driven by the intelligence community, coupled with the failure of the Administration to make counterterrorism a top intelligence priority over a five year period between 1993 and 1998 would prove to hinder every effort to capture or kill bin Laden or, more importantly, to understand the threat of al Qaeda.

The sheer volume of intelligence collected by the US intelligence community overwhelms the human analysts available to analyze it. It is mandatory that intelligence on national security issues be prioritized for specific goals– and when they are, that intelligence reported must be heeded. Further, in order to secure actionable counterterrorism intelligence, a transformation of US intelligence architecture was required – that without direction from the Presidential level or a significant terrorist attack (September 11) would have never come about. Clearly, effective leadership and a counterterrorism strategy would have driven a united intelligence effort, not only among the US intelligence community but would have included allied intelligence support, vital in taking down al Qaeda cells overseas. As a result, intelligence was never “good enough” to target Usama bin Laden – which, as a review of the new terrorism reveals, would have not destroyed al Qaeda.

3.1.3 Military Response

As illustrated in Figure 2, the US military response to al Qaeda as a tool of counterterrorism during the Clinton Administration was extremely limited. The August 1998 Tomahawk missile launch against the al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Sudan and an

al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan was the sole military action against al Qaeda prior to Operation Enduring Freedom in October, 2001. Many actions were planned against Osama bin Laden after the Embassy attacks in 1998, but were never acted on through a paucity of intelligence regarding his location. This “strategy” was also mistaken, since the al Qaeda network was extensive and would have continued to function even if Bin Laden was eliminated. Furthermore, it is safe to assume that the Clinton Administration would have claimed victory if Bin Laden was killed and US counterterrorism efforts would have been reduced or deemed “good enough” post-Bin Laden .

The strike on the al Qaeda camp and the pharmaceutical plant was a disaster. The Tomahawk attack on the al Qaeda camp destroyed a few structures and the Sudanese pharmaceutical plant thought to be associated with Usama bin Laden by the CIA was not. Clinton National Security Council staffers Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon lamented that the missile attack came to be regarded, domestically and globally-- wrongly, they argued -- "as the greatest foreign policy blunder of the Clinton presidency." Apart from the "public relations battering," Paul R. Pillar, the CIA's deputy counterterrorism chief at the time, later wrote, the episode inflicted a "broader blow . . . on the perceived integrity of U.S. intelligence and U.S. counterterrorist efforts generally."³⁸ Recalls Daniel Benjamin, that the skepticism after the attack, particularly on the part of reporters, scared Clinton away from any further tough action against Bin Laden. "The dismissal of the al-Shifa attack as a blunder had serious consequences, including the failure of the public to comprehend the nature of the al-Qaeda threat," Benjamin writes. "That in turn meant there was no support for decisive measures in Afghanistan — including, possibly, the use of U.S. ground forces — to hunt down the terrorists; and thus no national leader of either

party publicly suggested such action.³⁹ As a leader against terrorism, President Clinton had lost the initiative before he ever had it.

Immediately after the embassy bombings, President Clinton issued a "finding" under the 1974 Hughes-Ryan Amendment enabling intelligence agencies to fund covert operations against bin Laden. The finding's primary directive was to track and capture the al Qaeda leader, and it also authorized use of lethal force in the attempt. Within months, Clinton amended the finding three times, using a form of presidential authority known as a Memorandum of Notification. Each was classified. The first change, almost immediate, was to broaden the authority of U.S. officers or their recruited agents to use lethal force, enabling them to engage bin Laden and the fighters around him without any prospect of taking him into custody. "It became evident," said a party to the deliberations, "that there was no way to avoid killing him if we were going to go after him, and we shouldn't worry about it." Clinton's second Memorandum of Notification expanded the target of the covert campaign. It named a handful of close lieutenants -- sources said fewer than 10 -- to be captured or killed if found separately from Bin Laden.⁴⁰ Needless to say, no US forces were successful against Bin Laden, nor did this directive influence Bin Laden's actions. A public declaration against Bin Laden with support from other nations would have showed resolve and possibly altered Bin Laden's ability to operate al Qaeda. However, that strategy was not pursued.

The Clinton administration ordered the Navy to maintain two Los Angeles-class attack submarines on permanent station in the nearest available waters, enabling the U.S.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

military to place Tomahawk cruise missiles on any target in Afghanistan within about six hours of receiving the order. Three times after August 20, 1998, when Clinton ordered the only missile strike of his presidency against Bin Laden's organization, the CIA came close enough to pinpointing Bin Laden that Clinton authorized final preparations to launch. In each case, doubts about the intelligence aborted the mission.⁴¹ More than once, according to people with direct knowledge, Clinton asked (Joint Chief of Staff General) Shelton, a former Special Operations commander, whether he could drop a small ground combat team into an al Qaeda training camp to engage Bin Laden directly. Some of Clinton's advisers believed this would reduce the most stringent demands on intelligence. To hit Bin Laden with a missile, the CIA had to be able to place him inside the explosive radius of a warhead at a precise time at least six hours in the future. Special Forces, they said, might find him at a camp without having to forecast his movements inside it. Commenting post-Operation Enduring Freedom, General Shelton said "Absolutely nothing prevented us from running the kind of operation we're running now, if there had been a commitment to do that." However, Clinton's advisers concluded no threat or inducement short of all-out war would move Omar, the supreme Taliban leader. A limited bombardment would destroy the hard-won consensus behind U.N. sanctions against Afghanistan. And the first casualty would be the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which consumed Clinton's final months in office.⁴² "Getting" Usama bin Laden was a lower priority than the Mideast Peace process. The administration restricted its work to covert actions breaking up terrorist cells. Daniel Benjamin and other former administration officials say a significant number of terrorist plots were short-circuited,

⁴¹ Barton Gellman, "Broad Effort Launched After '98 Attacks" The Washington Post, December 19, 2001, p. 16.

preventing several acts of terrorism. "I see no reason to doubt their word on that," says R. James Woolsey. "They may have been doing a lot of stuff behind the scenes." But breaking up individual cells while avoiding larger-scale action probably had the effect of postponing terrorist acts rather than stopping them. Woolsey believes that such an approach was part of what he calls Clinton's "PR-driven" approach to terrorism, an approach that left the fundamental problem unsolved: "Do something to show you're concerned. Launch a few missiles in the desert, bop them on the head, arrest a few people. But just keep kicking the ball down the field."⁴³

Out of four terrorist attacks on US citizens and interests that Usama Bin Laden and al Qaeda have been associated with from 1993-2000, the US military conducted a retaliatory strike for one of them that resulted in a public and political backlash that clouded any further military strikes. Aside from demonstrating weak and inattentive US leadership and no discernable counterterrorism strategy, the poor US military response to terrorism probably emboldened Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda to plot and carry out greater, more lethal terrorist attacks against the US. US leadership had literally not gotten Usama bin Laden's message.

3.1.4 Diplomacy

As a counterterrorism element, diplomacy is essential to the success of every other element of counterterrorism. Bilateral, multilateral or international cooperation must be

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

achieved for the other elements of counterterrorism to go forward. Sadly, diplomatic misfires related to counterterrorism were plentiful during the Clinton administration.

In the mid 1990's, American diplomats pressed the hard-line Islamic regime of Sudan to expel Bin Laden, even if that meant pushing him back into Afghanistan. To build support for this effort among Middle Eastern governments, the State Department circulated a dossier that accused Bin Laden of financing radical Islamic causes around the world. The document implicated him in several attacks on Americans, including the 1992 bombing of a hotel in Aden, Yemen, where American troops had stayed on their way to Somalia. It also said Bin Laden's associates had trained the Somalis who killed eighteen American servicemen in Mogadishu in 1993. Sudanese officials met with their CIA and State Department counterparts and signaled that they might turn Bin Laden over to another country. Saudi Arabia and Egypt were possibilities. State Department and CIA officials urged both Egypt and Saudi Arabia to accept him, according to former Clinton officials. "But both were afraid of the domestic reaction and refused," one recalled.⁴⁴

Suffering politically from the fallout of the Tomahawk strikes, President Clinton and his national security cabinet turned their emphasis to detecting, disrupting and arresting members of terrorist cells in quiet cooperation with friendly foreign security services. This had been an ongoing project of the FBI and CIA since the World Trade Center bombing in 1993. Beginning in 1996, the Clinton team made increasing use of international commerce in terror suspects. Scores of times in the next five years, they persuaded allies to arrest members of al Qaeda and ship them somewhere else.

Frequently, somewhere else was not the United States. Such a transfer without legal

⁴⁴ Judith Miller, "Many Say U.S. Planned For Terror But Failed to Take Action", The New York Times, December 30, 2001, p.2.

process is called "rendition." Most took place in secret and have yet to be disclosed. A State Department accounting of extraditions and renditions in the 1990s, published in April, named only thirteen. At least forty more, according to sources, were removed forcibly from one foreign country to another on behalf of the United States. One episode took place in Albania the week after the embassy bombings. After foiling a truck bomb plot against the U.S. Embassy in Tirana, American intelligence officers guided Albanian authorities to five arrests of Egyptian Islamic Jihad members. The Americans flew the five men to Egypt, where they were executed after a military trial.⁴⁵ In light of the cumulative years of al Qaeda training terrorists in Afghanistan, the renditions had little effect on manpower available to al Qaeda .

Clinton's reaction to the USS COLE attack was more muted than his response to the previous attacks. While he called the bombing "a despicable and cowardly act" and said "We will find out who was responsible and hold them accountable," he seemed more concerned that the attack might threaten the Administration's work in the Middle East (the bombing came at the same time as a new spate of violence between Israelis and Palestinians). "If [the terrorists'] intention was to deter us from our mission of promoting peace and security in the Middle East, they will fail utterly," Clinton said on the morning of the attack. The next day, the Washington Post's John Harris, who had good connections inside the Administration, wrote, "While the apparent suicide bombing of the USS COLE may have been the more dramatic episode for the American public, the escalation between Israelis and Palestinians took the edge in preoccupying senior administration officials yesterday. This was regarded as the more fluid of the two

⁴⁵ Gellman, p 16.

problems, and it presented the broader threat to Clinton's foreign policy aims." Together with the embassy bombings, the COLE blast established a clear pattern of attacks on American interests carried out by Bin Laden's organization. Clinton had a solid rationale, and would most likely have had solid public support for strong military action. Yet he did nothing.⁴⁶

3.1.5 Sanctions

Among the elements of counterterrorism, financial sanctions take the most time – often several years to be effective in curbing terrorism. Most terrorism analysts doubt that unilateral economic sanctions, by themselves, can force major changes in the behavior of state sponsors on terrorism.⁴⁷ The 1993 World Trade Center attack cost only \$400 in materials; the 2001 attack cost \$500,000. This amount of money would be difficult to track at best, even if it had moved through the US. Nonetheless, sanctions have their role in curbing financial support to terrorist organizations – when they are applied. The Clinton administration shut down a 1995 investigation of Islamic charities, concerned that a public probe would expose Saudi Arabia's suspected ties to a global money-laundering operation that raised millions for anti-Israel terrorists, according to federal officials. Law enforcement authorities and others close to the aborted investigation said the State Department pressed federal officials to pull agents off the previously undisclosed probe after the charities were targeted in the diversion of cash to groups that fund terrorism.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Former federal prosecutor John J. Loftus said that four interrelated Islamic foundations, institutes and charities in Virginia with more than a billion dollars in assets donated by or through the Saudi Arabian government were allowed to continue under a veil of secrecy. "If federal agents had been allowed to conduct the investigation they wanted in 1995, they would have made the connection between the Saudi government and those charities." The Islamic Concern Project and the World and Islam Studies Enterprise have been named by the State Department as front organizations that raised funds for Islamic Jihad and Hamas. They have been tied to the diversion of millions of dollars to terrorists for weapons, safe haven, training and equipment. In the aborted 1995 investigation, in a sealed affidavit, FBI said that the Islamic Concern Project and World and Islam Studies Enterprise — working with charities in Virginia — committed fraud and "served as a vehicle by which [Islamic Jihad] raised funds to support terrorist activities in the occupied territories." One former and three current federal law enforcement officials said the new probe began after U.S. officials learned that intelligence agents in India had wiretapped the telephone of a Pakistani charity funded by the Saudi government and discovered the transfer of \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta, one of the nineteen al Qaeda hijackers in the September 11 attacks.⁴⁸

Executive Order 12947, of January 23, 1995, also known as the Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, blocks assets in the US of groups designated as foreign terrorist organizations (FTO). Further, the order makes it a criminal offense for US persons to provide an FTO with material support or resources, such as financial

⁴⁷ Raphael F. Perl, Terrorism, The Future and US Foreign Policy, CRS Issue Brief For Congress, December 12, 2001.

⁴⁸ Jerry Seper, "Clinton White House Axed Terror-Fund Probe", The Washington Times, April 12, 2002, p 4.

contributions. While this law contributed to law enforcement efforts against terrorist financial networks within the US, it had little effect internationally. The seven states designated by the State Department as sponsors of terrorism— Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Cuba- are subject to sanctions that bar them from purchasing certain technology and military equipment. Though al Qaeda was in Afghanistan since at least 1996, Afghanistan was not on the list. Instead, through a chain of bureaucratic misfiring, it was given the far milder classification of “not cooperating fully with US antiterrorism efforts.”⁴⁹ A subsequent executive order (13099), issued after the embassy bombings, named al Qaeda as an FTO and allowed US law enforcement agencies to seize any assets within the US associated with Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda. The US Treasury Department’s report in 2000 states no al Qaeda assets were frozen or seized within the US.

In 1998, Clinton Administration officials began trying to attack al Qaeda's financial network. Shortly after the embassy bombings, the US began threatening states and financial institutions with sanctions if they failed to cut off assistance to those who did business with al Qaeda and the Taliban. In 1999 and early 2000, some \$255 million of Taliban-controlled assets was blocked in US accounts, according to a former White House official, William F. Wechsler,. Mr. Wechsler said the search for al Qaeda's assets was often stymied by poor cooperation from Middle Eastern and South Asian states. The US, too, he added, had problems. "Few intelligence officials who understand the nuances of the global banking system" were fluent in Arabic. While the CIA had done a "reasonably good job" analyzing al Qaeda, he wrote, its attempts were "poor" at

⁴⁹ Shoenfeld, p.22

developing sources within Bin Laden's financial network. The FBI, he argued, had similar shortcomings.⁵⁰

The effect of freezing the Taliban's funds on al Qaeda is unclear, yet it obviously was not effective. Issuing executive orders that assisted in the "rule of law" approach to counterterrorism were anti-terrorist in nature, i.e. defensive, meaning the order only helped to prosecute terrorists once they are in the US. They do not contribute to counterterrorism (i.e. offensive) efforts and send no warning signal to Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda. The use of sanctions against al Qaeda and Usama bin Laden would have had to have been an international, multi-nation effort, led and articulated by US leadership, making the sanctions as a part of a larger counterterrorism strategy to be effective.

3.1.6 US Counterterrorism Leadership and Strategy before 9/11

As outlined in the previous sections, US counterterrorism efforts were rendered ineffectual over an eight year period by numerous factors. They include:

- Counterterrorism was a low priority in the Clinton Administration
- Failure to recognize Usama Bin Laden and al Qaeda as a formidable threat until 1998
- Once the threat of al Qaeda was known, the US response was inadequate and encouraged further attacks
- US Counterterrorism strategy was reflexive, short term, not balanced or mutually supported by combined efforts of elements of Counterterrorism

⁵⁰ Ibid.

- Counterterrorism efforts caught few terrorists but never damaged al Qaeda
- Poor and ignored US intelligence was further hindered by low priority of counterterrorism intelligence and lack of community focus
- Poor US leadership

Usama Bin Laden's declaration of killing Americans, military and civilian, got virtually no response from the Clinton Administration. As the problem posed by Usama bin Laden grew steadily more acute over the course of a decade, how did the US respond? The tendency to overreact to shocking events, and to fall into complacency in their absence is natural and inevitable. In the case of Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda, the US fell into complacency in the presence of such events.⁵¹ It is clear through the administration's actions after the Embassy attacks that Bin Laden had not gained the Administration's full attention until 1998. By 1998, al Qaeda was at its full strength, partly thanks to indirect and ineffectual CT policies. The facts represented in figure 2 in no way impugn the dedicated counterterrorism professionals who were at the forefront of US counterterrorism efforts; it reveals that they were hamstrung by an administration that did not make counterterrorism a priority. Nancy Soderberg, a former senior aide in President Clinton's National Security Council, when asked about counterterrorism policy pre-September 11, stated, "In hindsight, it wasn't enough, and anyone involved in policy would have to admit that."⁵²

Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright has stated that the Clinton Administration lacked popular support for any action against Usama bin Laden

⁵¹ Shoenfeld, p 27.

⁵² Shoenfeld, p 28.

more vigorous than what it undertook and only with the September 11 attacks did public opinion awaken fully to the threat of terrorism. In her words, "...It has mobilized people in a way that the destruction of two embassies and the Cole didn't." This line of reasoning points to the use of public opinion polls in formulating national security plans. The argument of a lack of congressional support falls flat as well – better that the Clinton Administration do their best to focus on counterterrorism and not be supported by Congress than not to bring it up at all – that is the mark of leadership. Further, a series of polls in the 1990's revealed extremely high levels (upwards of 75% in some polls) of support for a forceful counter terrorism policy.⁵³ Where was the disconnection? The lack of leadership and counterterrorism policy had the largest collective negative effect on US counterterrorism in the 1990's.

Lack of US counterterrorism strategy has had major implications in the last nine years. "Admittedly, it's easier to show leadership after September 11 [but] that's what leaders are for," says L. Paul Bremer, the top counterterrorism official in the Reagan administration and head of a congressional commission on terrorism. "Instead of showing strength, they showed weakness. The administration didn't have a very clear strategy to fight terrorism, and it doesn't seem to have been a high priority."⁵⁴ Figure 2 describes an administration overwhelmed with

- Perceived or unintended outcomes of military retaliation
- No consequence management and
- Procrastination in decisionmaking.

⁵³ Shoenfeld, p 28.

⁵⁴ Page, p 1.

Its effects on diplomacy were predictable. If the US had no strategy, how could other countries (allies and others) predict what we would do in any crisis? Or believe the importance of taking action against al Qaeda cells in their own countries? Strategy was based on what other nations would do or think, rather than take the lead and take action against terrorism. Using critical analysis, Usama bin Laden's impression of US counterterrorism reflected his perception of western values - weak, casualty-averse, and incompetent. His impressions of US military reaction were shaped by US withdrawal from Somalia in 1993 and the ill-conceived Tomahawk attack in 1998. There is no doubt that al Qaeda and other foreign terrorist organizations were emboldened by a demonstrated lack of US resolve. Al Qaeda attacks increased in audacity through the 1990's, as if to get our collective attention. Our international image of being tough on terrorism was poorly managed. The wrong prioritization of national intelligence collection resulted in the US losing years of analysis and focus on al Qaeda. Laws were not created fast enough to share intelligence among agencies nor allow them to pursue terrorists across transnational boundaries, physical and fiscal. Figure 1 hints at the bureaucratic constipation associated with over 100 separate government offices with roles and responsibilities in counterterrorism. How could they begin to share information without a single authority and a strategy to follow?

In March 2001, in testimony to the House Subcommittee on National Security, RAND terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman stated “ This issue in constructing an effective counterterrorism policy is, however, no longer the question of more attention, bigger budgets and increased staffing that it once was; but a need of a greater focus, a better

appreciation of the problem and firmer understanding of the threat, and, in turn, the development of a comprehensive national strategy.”⁵⁵ As the Gilmore Commission observed in its first annual report to the President and the Congress in December 1999, the promulgation of a succession of presidential decision directives (PDDs 39, 62, and 63) neither equates to, nor can substitute for, a truly comprehensive, fully coordinated strategy.⁵⁶ The effect, the report concluded, was that the multiplicity of Federal agencies and programs concerned with combating terrorism were inevitably fragmented and uncoordinated – replete with overlapping responsibilities, duplication of effort and lacking clear focus.⁵⁷ A weak counterterrorism strategy has had many side effects, including undermining the CT policies of our allies (one the four pillars of US CT policy), as stated in a 1992 RAND study examining the fundamental requirements of an effective counterterrorism policy.⁵⁸ A second Gilmore Commission report concluded that an effective strategy must have specific direction from the President in consultation with all of his senior advisors who have responsibility for related federal efforts.⁵⁹ In essence, it must have strong, directed leadership.

3.2 In terms of Pre 9/11 and Post 9/11

“Surprise... includes neglect of responsibility but also responsibility so poorly defined or so ambiguously delegated that action gets lost. It includes gaps in intelligence, but also

⁵⁵ Bruce Hoffman, Combating Terrorism: In Search of a National Strategy, Presented to the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations, March 27 2001.

⁵⁶ Hoffman.

⁵⁷ Hoffman.

⁵⁸ Hoffman.

⁵⁹ Hoffman.

intelligence that, like a string of pearls too precious to wear, is too sensitive to give to those who need it. It includes the alarm that fails to work, but also the alarm that has gone off so often it has been disconnected. It includes the unalert watchman, but also the one who knows he'll be chewed out by his superior if he gets higher authority out of bed. It includes the contingencies that occur to no one, but also those that everyone assumes somebody else is taking care of. It includes straightforward procrastination, but also decisions protracted by internal disagreement. It includes, in addition, the inability of individual human beings to rise to the occasion until they are sure it is the occasion--which is usually too late (Unlike movies, real life provides no musical background to tip us off to the climax). Finally, as at Pearl Harbor, surprise may include some measure of genuine novelty introduced by the enemy, and possibly some sheer bad luck.

The results, at Pearl Harbor, were sudden, concentrated, and dramatic. The failure, however, was cumulative, widespread, and rather drearily familiar... Surprise is everything involved in a government's (or in an alliance's) failure to anticipate effectively.⁶⁰

Arguably, the greatest contribution the September 11 attacks made to US counterterrorism was that of cementing the US public behind any effort, no matter what the cost, against terrorism. Much like the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, 9/11 served to cease any public/political debate on the scope of US efforts against terrorism. As the Japanese thought in the late 1930's, (and demonstrated by US actions since 1993) Usama bin Laden was certain America could not achieve consensus about any issue and would

⁶⁰ Thomas C. Schelling, Forward to **Pearl Harbor; Warning and Decision**, Roberta Wohlstetter, California, Stanford University Press, 1963.

retreat in the face of US casualties. Instead, the American public, as they did 60 years before, have united in purpose behind the Bush Administration against terrorism. Some would argue that without the public support of the American public, the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban to surrender Bin Laden could not have happened. It is important to note that events, not divine leadership, have driven the US to a “war on terrorism”, the most extreme form of counterterrorism strategy. And yet, public support does not make winning the war on terrorism a *fait accompli*. President Bush, in his 20 September 2001 speech to Congress stated several aspects of his counterterrorism strategy.

“We will direct every resource at our command--every means of diplomacy, every tool of intelligence, every instrument of law enforcement, every financial influence, and every necessary weapon of war--to the destruction and to the defeat of the global terror network. We will starve terrorists of funding, turn them one against another, drive them from place to place until there is no refuge or no rest...And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. ...This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. ...We will ask and we will need the help of police forces, intelligence service and banking systems around the world. ...our resolve must not pass.”

A clear, purposeful strategy emerges from this speech. Using every tool of counterterrorism, the US will hold harborers of terrorists accountable. Nations have a clear choice; they are with us or against us. The Taliban government in Afghanistan allowed Usama bin Laden to use their country to pursue his goal of creating "one jihad

camp for the world," as a former bin Laden lieutenant put it.⁶¹ The Taliban government, although not the target in the war on terrorism, became a casualty. Uniting nations to fight terrorism utilizes their collective intelligence, cumulative law enforcement assets and financial institutions acting as a force multiplier against terrorism, filling gaps in our intelligence and extending our reach against al Qaeda. Finally, the American public is reminded that the war against terrorism will take years, and that their commitment must not waver. Bold leadership and clear strategy have already begun to pay dividends in the war against terrorism taking on and dismantling the Taliban government. US forces and forces from 26 nations are working against the al Qaeda network in Afghanistan and Pakistan. US /Allied counterterrorism efforts are underway in the Philippines and Georgia. European and Asian nations have also raided al Qaeda cells within their countries, now realizing the threat within their own borders. Strong leadership, a clear CT strategy and skillful management nationally and internationally will make measurable progress in counterterrorism.

⁶¹ Engleberg, p 11.

CHAPTER 4

LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY VS THE NEW TERRORISM

4.1 Leadership against the New Terrorism

It would be accurate to say that reversing the leadership faults in counterterrorism of the Clinton Administration would be the formula for victory in leadership over the new terrorism. Making counterterrorism a top administration priority, seeking other nations to support the fight against terrorism, making it a public crusade, conducting direct military operations against al Qaeda and removing terrorist sanctuaries, creating new agencies and combining the elements of counterterrorism in a clear strategy will be the hallmarks of success against the new terrorism.

Leadership for US counterterrorism will mean more than those steps. Aspects of this leadership will include:

Commitment. It is important that the world – especially the new terrorists - understand US resolve has changed and the US will therefore pursue them without any hesitation, unilaterally, if necessary. This strategy must be demonstrated, not just discussed in speeches for the new terrorists to understand the US will not roll over when attacked. Just as importantly, the elements of US counterterrorism - intelligence and legal agencies, the US military and the State Department also must understand that all of their focus must include counterterrorism.

Diplomacy. Leadership must be prepared to do the unpleasant things. The Administration must convince the public and Congress of the path they want to take want

to take, then pursue that goal without distractions. It must stay on a chosen strategic course whether public opinion or other nations do not agree with the stated strategy. Diplomacy must reach out to all nations and be imaginative in reaching mutual goals for counterterrorism, but stay firm on our vision of our national interests. The US cannot be misunderstood internationally – the US dare not appear tentative. Counterterrorism must be a top priority and the rest of the world must believe it. Some countries will never like the US because of its culture, economic success and its position as the leader on the world stage – as stated in chapter 2, it is convenient for some leaders of Middle eastern countries to keep the US as a villain, no matter what US actions are. Some countries will come around to US counterterrorism strategy, others never will. This is not a popularity contest.

Action. Military action must be swift, abrupt, irreversible and deliberate. The US must live up to its reputation as a superpower and act as such, using its influence worldwide and its economic, technological and industrial edge against terrorism. The new terrorism understands action, not laws, sanctions or speeches. If it constricts its goals and actions to please other nations, the US will be at a disadvantage. The US should not be apologetic for its convictions. Do not flinch at a setback; press harder. US counterterrorism strategy and leadership must thoroughly understand the new terrorism in order to defeat it. The new terrorists are apocalyptic in nature and are not “redeemable;” they must be killed or imprisoned for life. To fight them again somewhere else at a time of their choosing or in a court is not a desired endstate. Their martyrdom should not be a concern. Strike at the heart of the new terrorism – their leadership and sanctuaries. It is

important to realize that the new terrorists do not want what the US wants – American values should not be transposed to theirs.

When the US succeeds against the new terrorists, the US must do so overwhelmingly; there should be few limits on our application of force. The US must not be timid in victory, it does not suit our national character. The US is expected to win the war against terrorism.

Vision. What is our endstate? Where do we want to be in 2006 in the War against terrorism? Winston Churchill, who knew the Allies would win World War II, continually shaped the endstate of the war – its boundaries, alliances and the extent of the British Empire. US leaders in counterterrorism must do the same, as the endstate will guide the strategy, instead of reacting from event to event, without a final goal.

4.2 Counterterrorism Strategy

How can the US attack the new terrorism? What is the outline of a counterterrorism strategy? Reviewing al Qaeda's centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities – which will change during the war on terrorism – the following are key points in a philosophy which will attack Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda vulnerabilities, close US counterterrorism policy seams and underpin a successful US counterterrorism strategy.

4.2.1 Restore Fear

Usama Bin Laden attacked Americans because he does not fear America. US CT efforts against al Qaeda must be unrelenting, thorough and global in scope. The US must shed its predictable responses to terrorist attacks. Apathy, or the appearance of it, is our greatest enemy. No terrorist attack against US citizens anywhere in the world should be tolerated – the perpetrators will be hunted down, killed, arrested or imprisoned. The US must use all its force swiftly and unyieldingly against UBL and al Qaeda –unilaterally or otherwise - worldwide. UBL and his followers – most importantly, his potential followers must be made to understand the consequences of the attacks of 9/11. This presents a new challenge for the US organizationally, as one of the leading aspects of the new terrorism is that it is transnational. Creating a preemptive and responsive response engine (of military and law enforcement agencies) that can respond to intelligence tips on terrorists in a short time frame with a concise, seamless decision loop and information flow (and clear rules of engagement) anywhere on the globe requires innovative thinking and bold reorganization. Al Qaeda is a mature functioning organization; revelations about its capabilities and reach are still surprising terrorist experts as they are uncovered, including its quest for weapons of mass destruction. Decisive, sustained action must be taken against terrorism, which will mean shifting paradigms and transforming processes in use today. Resolve of that caliber was demonstrated by President Bush on 9/11, as the first president since Lincoln to give the military an order to fire on fellow Americans.⁶²

⁶² Bush's decision, made in the first hours of the terrorist attacks, authorized Air Force jets to shoot down the UA flight 93 that appeared to be headed for another suicide assault on the nation's capital. Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania.

Dedicated leadership and clear strategy shape the environment for difficult, sometimes unpopular changes to be made.

4.2.2 Isolate

As his financial network is one of Bin Laden's critical vulnerabilities, Bin Laden and al Qaeda must be isolated from any financial or state sponsored support. This will take the efforts of international financial institutions that do not habitually do business with the US. For example, al Qaeda finances have recently been tied to the gold trade in Dubai. The US must make it known through its actions, diplomatic efforts and international sanctions that support to al Qaeda must be stopped. This will not take force, but arbitration, as countries respond to different motivations. Prior to the war in Afghanistan, it was thought that Pakistan would never support US military operations in the region, let alone provide assistance, basing or overflight privileges. Quite the opposite proved to be true – Pakistan proved to be supportive after discussions with Secretary of State Colin Powell. Again, this could not have been established without bold leadership. Bin Laden, al Qaeda and associated violent Muslim extremist groups, must be seen as pariahs - ideologically and as a means of getting back at the West for the failures of Arab governments. That is a long-term task that will be addressed below.

4.2.3 Shape Perception/Educate

There must be constant management of our strategy's effectiveness. How is the US seen in the Islamic world? Who in the Islamic world sees the US in what role? What do Arabs and Muslims respect? Over the longer term, the US must get more involved with Islamic nations; the plight of Arab governments cannot be solved by foreign aid alone. Their economies may teeter, but not be allowed to fall. Instead of the US being blamed for their failures, it must be made clear that the US is responsible for some of their successes – protecting Kuwaitis and Saudis in the Gulf War and protecting Kosovar Albanians in the Kosovo war. When the US helps other nations in conflict, Americans are reluctant to draw praise and recognition to US achievements. The US must recognize and use its image to influence the Arab world. Ignorance breeds fear, which is the formula that brings recruits to Muslim extremists like Bin Laden. Freedom of information and the free flow of ideas will help educate Muslims about the West and form their own opinions about what is right for their societies and countries. In the information age, the US is supremely equipped, yet it has failed to use it to its advantage. In short, the US must put more effort into making Arab societies work. If the US does not take the lead, who will? Bin Laden is an outcome of failed Arab societies, where young men can go to make their mark on the world when they cannot succeed in their societies. We need not “dread being too much dreaded” as Edmund Burke, 19th century philosopher said about the British Empire i.e., fear the outcome of our involvement in shaping foreign affairs. Civilization will continue to change and evolve; the US must do the same. As the so-called leader of the free world, we must lead history, or be made obsolete by it.

4.2.4 Innovation

As established earlier, terrorism today is a transnational act and an asymmetric threat that crosses many boundaries and requires some or all of the elements of counterterrorism to defeat it. This threat suggests new solutions; organizational relationships and specialized force packages need to be created. This may include new roles and missions for government agencies, including DOD – for example covert action, domestically and internationally. Law enforcement agencies, under current law, must gather a body of evidence before they can arrest suspects (the illegal act must be committed or the conspirators must be caught with incriminating evidence on them), rather than acting on scraps of intelligence to preempt terrorist acts.⁶³ Why not shorten the terrorist strike decision loop to make US actions unpredictable for terrorists? As a result of 9/11, the architecture of the US intelligence community may be totally changed, akin to the National Security Act of 1947, which literally created the US intelligence community we have today as a result of the intelligence failure at Pearl Harbor. The US intelligence community needs to replace the current stove-piped intelligence system and fix the organizational problems arising from crevices in overlapping jurisdiction and responsibility. No process, agency or method related to counterterrorism or the defense of the nation can be safe from review in order to wring out novel contributions to combat the new terrorism. Transformation (the evolution and deployment of combat capabilities that provide revolutionary or asymmetric advantages to our forces) can play a large role in counterterrorism and has appeared already in the war in Afghanistan. In the fight against al Qaeda, US Special Forces on the ground have called up devastating explosions

from the sky before 18th century horsemen charge in to sweep the enemy from the field - a “Star Trek” episode come to life. The US has all the tools to reduce the threat of the new terrorism; the challenge is to find the right mix and application of those tools. Solid leadership that can sustain support from the American public and allies abroad while keeping Bin Laden and al Qaeda at risk with a solid strategy US counterterrorism can defeat the new terrorism.

⁶³ ADM Studeman, (Ret) Interview, 15 February 2002, TRW Offices, Reston, VA.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Edmund Burke once stated “All that is necessary for Evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.” There were many failures and missed opportunities over the last nine years of counterterrorism policy, attributable to poor leadership. Nearly every field in figure 2 would have been positively changed if active, bold leadership had been in place. In the meantime, the new terrorism flourished nearly unchecked, growing in audacity, reach, lethality and popularity among extremists from a dissatisfied Muslim world. The new terrorism fed off the timidity of US response to its attacks. The attacks on 9/11 provided the last ingredient needed for war, the will of the people, and forced US leadership to use counterterrorism against the new terrorism, using all of its tools – the rule of law, intelligence, diplomacy, military actions, and sanctions. At the end of the day, US leadership, with a clear strategy to restore fear, isolate, shape perception and use innovation against the new terrorism’s critical vulnerabilities will reduce the threat of the new terrorism.

US COUNTERTERRORISM VS THE NEW TERRORISM:
LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGY ARE THE KEYS TO SUCCESS

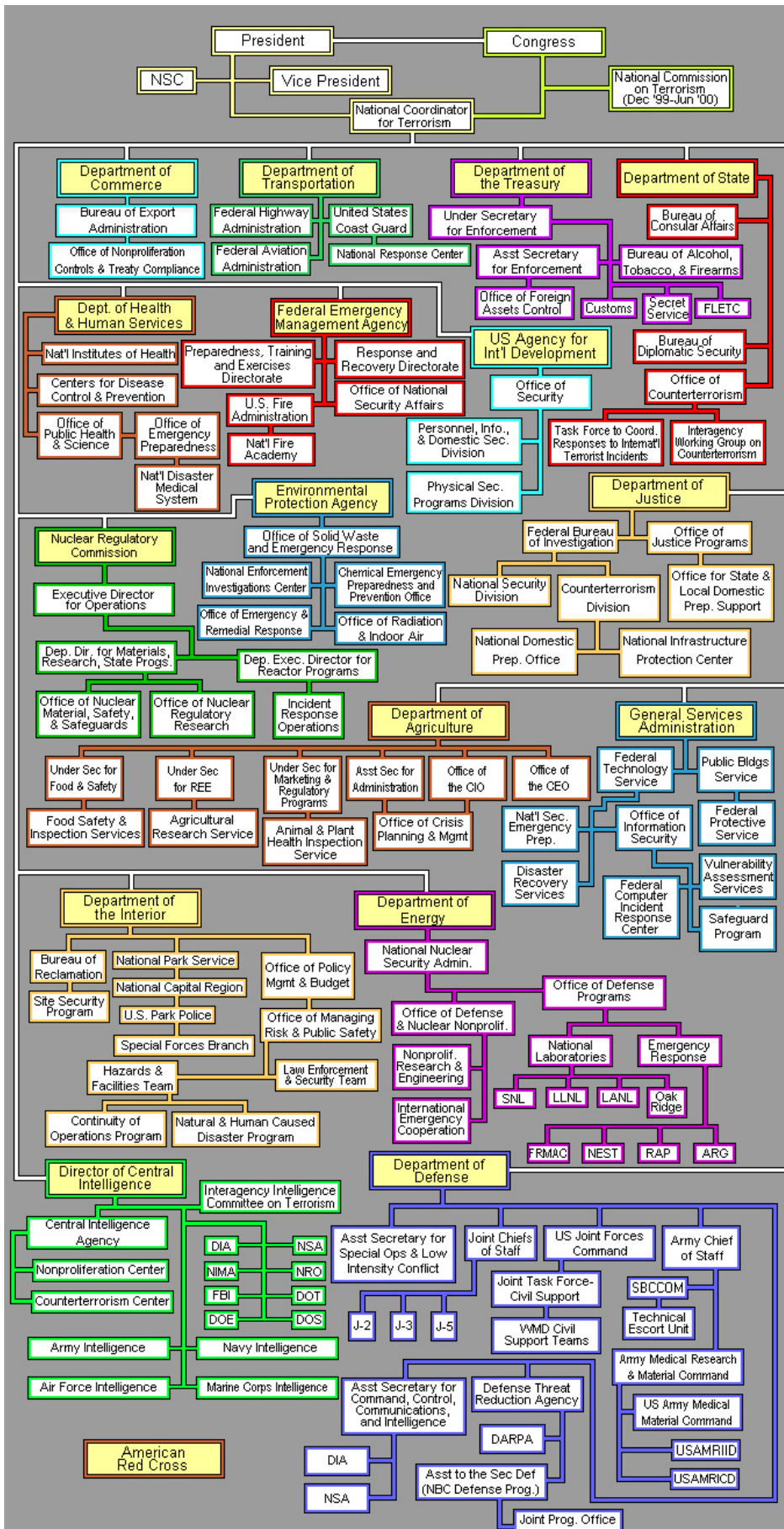
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Figure 1.



For Figure 2, see attached file.

Figure 2

| EVENT | MILITARY RESPONSE | RULE OF LAW | DIPLOMACY | SANCTIONS | COMMENTS |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feb 26, 1993: Truck bomb attack at WTC, 6 killed | _____ | Six members of IG arrested, tried, convicted and imprisoned | _____ | _____ | Failure to investigate roots of attack; first chance to recognize al Qaeda |
| OCT 3, 1993: Failed US Army Ranger Somali raid results in 18 US Rangers dead | _____ | _____ | US forces depart Somalia 31 Mar, 1994; Decision announced several days after failed raid | _____ | Usama bin Laden believes US resolve is weak, casualty-averse |
| APRIL 1993: Iraqi attempt to assassinate former President Bush | After 2 months seeking approval, from UN & INT'L community, US conducts TLAM attack on Iraqi Nat'l Intelligence Center | _____ | _____ | _____ | 1993 - 1995 Islamic Terrorism operations vs Americans continue |
| NOV 1995: 5 Americans killed in car bomb attack in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | _____ | 1995 Presidential Directive gives FBI authority to investigate terrorism vs Americans intl'ly & domestically | Pressure on Saudi government to share info with FBI on investigations unsuccessful | _____ | _____ |
| Sudan offers extradition of Bin Laden | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | Refused by Saudi Arabia, Egypt and US |
| JUNE 1996: 19 killed, 240 injured in Khobar towers car bomb attack in Saudi Arabia | _____ | FBI investigation results in few arrests, investigation hampered by lack of Saudi cooperation. JUN 2001 indictment on 13 Saudis and 01 Lebanese; Saudi's turn over no suspects as of this writing. | _____ | _____ | Administration ignored US Intelligence community & INT'L terrorism links to Iranians, Hizballah; Saudis arrest 40 suspects but give U.S. no access |
| 1998: Bin Laden issues Fatwa | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| AUG 7, 1998: Car bomb attacks on Nairobi & Tanzania - 200 dead, including 12 Americans | TLAM attack on al Qaeda trng camp & Al Shifa pharmaceutical factory, later not found not linked to Bin Laden | _____ | _____ | _____ | 1998 Presidential Directive-62 established Office of the National Coordinator for Security Infrastructure & Counterterrorism |
| DEC 14, 1999: Ahmed Ressaam arrested in Port Angeles, WA for smuggling 130 lbs of explosives | No threat of Military action vs Taliban | _____ | Economic sanctions against Taliban: Taliban directly warned by not to support Bin Laden | _____ | |
| OCT 12, 2000: Bomb-laden boat attack on USS COLE in Yemen; 19 dead | Bin Laden involvement inconclusive; Discussion of bombing al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan | _____ | Yemen uncooperative during FBI investigation; Pres. phone call to Yemeni leader yields no change | _____ | President Clinton quoted "The attack on COLE will not deter the Middle East peace process." Attack occurs 3 weeks prior to US Presidential election. |